



## Professional Alignment in Primary Education: The Interplay Between Teacher Certification, Workload, and Assignment Linearity

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### Abstract

The transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia, coupled with the issuance of the Ministerial Regulation No. 11/2025 on Teacher Workload and Ministerial Decree No. 222/O/2025 on Teacher Certification Linearity, has significantly affected the assignment of linear English teachers as classroom teachers in elementary schools. This systematic literature review aims to analyze the impact of certification and workload policies on English teacher assignments, learning coverage and quality, and curriculum development recommendations integrating educational technology. Following the PRISMA 2020 protocol, 44 studies were selected from 1,248 records across Google Scholar, Sinta, Garuda, Scopus, and ERIC (2013–March 2026) and analyzed using thematic synthesis. Findings reveal that linearity policies create opportunities but compel teachers to assume roles beyond their specialization; workload fulfillment often reduces English instructional time; teaching quality is affected by time constraints and underutilization of technology; and curriculum transition increases autonomy yet leaves assignment challenges unresolved. Integrating educational technologies such as Learning Management Systems, AI-assisted tools, augmented reality, and blended learning can expand English learning coverage while alleviating teacher workload. The study recommends innovative curriculum models emphasizing teacher collaboration, community of practice, and technology integration to optimize the contributions of linear English teachers without compromising student learning hours.

**Keywords:** English Linear Teachers, Teacher Certification, Workload, Classroom Assignment, Educational Technology

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## INTRODUCTION

Elementary education in Indonesia has undergone substantial curriculum transformations over the past decade. The 2013 Curriculum (K13) emphasized a scientific approach, authentic assessment, and character development through integrated competencies in attitudes, knowledge, and skills. English was introduced as a local content or extracurricular subject in selected schools, with limited instructional hours (Efendi et al., 2024). The transition to the Merdeka Curriculum (2021–2025) introduced greater flexibility, including teaching at the right level, integrated projects, and teacher autonomy in instructional design (Dirwan et al., 2023). Nevertheless, structural challenges such as high administrative workload, limited differentiation, and teacher readiness persisted (Rosyada et al., 2024). Implementing Merdeka Curriculum demands innovative pedagogical approaches



and technology integration, yet administrative and resource limitations remain (Elvina et al., 2026).

Linear English teachers hold a unique position in elementary schools. Under K13, English was introduced in Grade III with limited contact hours, and specialist teachers enhanced early literacy and cultural exposure (Angraeni & Yusuf, 2022). However, the scarcity of English teachers often forced homeroom teachers without a language background to deliver instruction, reducing coverage and quality (Efendi et al., 2024). New policies, including Ministerial Regulation No. 11/2025 on Teacher Workload and Decree No. 222/O/2025 on Certification Linearity, expanded teacher roles and responsibilities, allowing English-certified teachers to serve as classroom and coding–AI teachers, thus creating dual assignments (Kemendikdasmen, 2025; Tim Redaksi InfoPendidikan BIC, 2025).

Previous studies highlight challenges in teacher workload, linearity, and pedagogical competence (Maili & Hestiningsih, 2016; Putri et al., 2025). While technology tools such as LMS, AI-assisted tools, AR, and blended learning improve engagement and reduce administrative burden (Hanafiah et al., 2026; Fatimina et al., 2026), empirical evidence linking policy impacts to technology-mediated teaching remains limited. This study addresses the research gaps by systematically reviewing the effects of certification and workload policies on English teacher assignments, learning coverage, and quality, and by exploring technology-enabled solutions to optimize teacher performance in Merdeka Curriculum contexts.

Despite the growing body of research on curriculum reform, teacher workload, and English language teaching in Indonesian elementary schools, the literature remains fragmented in three important ways. First, prior studies have largely examined the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum or the Merdeka Curriculum as separate phenomena, without systematically tracing how recent regulatory changes on teacher workload and certification linearity reshape the professional roles of English teachers at the primary level. Second, existing scholarship tends to focus on either pedagogical practices or administrative burden, while giving limited attention to the interaction between policy, teacher assignment patterns, instructional time allocation, and the continuity of English learning provision in schools where English is not a compulsory core subject. Third, although educational technologies such as learning management systems, AI-assisted applications, augmented reality, and blended learning have been increasingly discussed in Indonesian education, there is still insufficient synthesis of how these tools can function not merely as pedagogical enhancements but as strategic responses to workload pressure, dual-role assignments, and curriculum transition. As a result, a comprehensive evidence-based understanding of how certification and workload policies influence the deployment, effectiveness, and sustainability of linear English teachers in elementary schools is still lacking.

This study offers novelty by positioning teacher assignment policy, curriculum transition, and technology integration within a single analytical framework. Rather than examining English teaching, certification, or workload in isolation, this review synthesizes evidence on how the transition from K13 to the Merdeka Curriculum intersects with Ministerial Regulation No. 11/2025 and Ministerial Decree No. 222/O/2025 to affect the assignment of linear English teachers as classroom teachers, the scope and quality of English learning, and the feasibility of technology-supported instructional models in elementary schools. Accordingly, the study aims to: (1) analyze the impact of certification linearity and teacher workload policies on the assignment patterns of English teachers in Indonesian elementary schools; (2) examine the implications of these policies for English learning coverage, instructional quality, and teacher professional practice during curriculum transition; and (3) formulate evidence-based recommendations for curriculum and school-level implementation by identifying technology-integrated models that can optimize the role of

linear English teachers while maintaining instructional effectiveness and student learning opportunities.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021) to investigate the impact of teacher certification and workload policies on the assignment of linear English teachers as classroom teachers in elementary schools under the Merdeka Curriculum. SLR was chosen to synthesize evidence from multiple studies systematically and transparently. The research design involved identifying, selecting, and analyzing published literature to address the research objectives, which included assessing policy impacts on teacher assignment, coverage, learning quality, and exploring technology-mediated solutions.

The population of this study comprised all empirical and conceptual publications related to English teachers in Indonesian elementary schools, teacher certification, workload regulations, and technology integration in curriculum implementation from January 2013 to March 2026. A total of 1,248 records were retrieved from Google Scholar, SINTA, GARUDA, Scopus, and ERIC databases. After removing duplicates and applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, 44 studies were selected for analysis. Inclusion criteria covered journal articles, proceedings, theses, policy reports, and books available in full text in Indonesian or English, focusing on primary school English teaching, teacher workload, linearity policies, or educational technology. Studies focusing on other subjects, secondary schools, or irrelevant topics were excluded (Listia & Kamal, 2013; Efendi et al., 2024).

Data collection involved extracting relevant information from selected studies, including author, year, publication type, research context, sample characteristics, study objectives, methodologies, findings related to teacher assignment, workload, learning quality, and technology use, as well as recommendations. Thematic synthesis was conducted in three stages: line-by-line coding to identify key messages, developing descriptive themes, and forming analytical themes reflecting relationships across studies (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Quality assessment was performed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) and the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) according to the study type. The synthesis aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the policy impacts and highlight technology-supported solutions to optimize English teacher performance in the Merdeka Curriculum context.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This systematic literature review synthesized evidence from 44 studies published between 2013 and March 2026 to examine how certification linearity and workload policies shape the assignment of English teachers in Indonesian elementary schools, particularly when English-certified teachers are required to assume classroom-teacher responsibilities. Following thematic synthesis, the findings are organized into two major analytical sections. The first section focuses on policy, workload, and teacher assignment patterns, showing how certification linearity and workload fulfillment restructure the professional roles of English teachers and alter the allocation of English instructional time. The second section examines teaching quality, curriculum consequences, and technology integration, highlighting how dual-role assignments affect pedagogical practice and how digital tools can be mobilized to sustain English learning coverage under the Merdeka Curriculum. Rather than presenting the reviewed studies as isolated findings, this section interprets them as part of a broader transformation in Indonesian elementary education, where teacher deployment, curriculum flexibility, and digital innovation increasingly intersect.

## Policy, Workload, and the Reconfiguration

The first major finding of this review is that recent policy changes have reconfigured the assignment of English teachers in Indonesian elementary schools by shifting them from a predominantly specialist role toward a more fluid and multi-functional position within school staffing systems. Across the reviewed studies, certification linearity and workload regulations did not simply define who is eligible to teach English; they also redefined what counts as legitimate teacher work and how schools can deploy teachers to meet institutional needs. Ministerial Regulation No. 11/2025, which formalizes a 37.5-hour teacher workload, and Ministerial Decree No. 222/O/2025, which broadens the scope of certification linearity, collectively create a framework in which English-certified teachers can be assigned not only to English instruction but also to classroom teaching and other curricular functions. This policy shift expands the employability and formal recognition of English teachers, but it also alters their professional orientation. In practice, schools use these regulations to redistribute teaching duties, especially when English contact hours are too limited to satisfy workload requirements. As a result, linearity is no longer interpreted solely as alignment between certification and subject expertise; instead, it increasingly operates as a regulatory mechanism that enables flexible teacher deployment across multiple instructional domains.

**Table 1. Summary of Thematic Findings on Certification, Workload, and English Teacher Assignment**

No.	Study	Key Findings	Implications for Teacher Assignment	Policy/Organizational Implications	Study Quality
1	Kemendikdasmen (2025)	Teacher workload set at 37.5 hours/week including teaching, planning, assessment, mentoring, and additional duties	English-certified teachers may be assigned as classroom teachers when English contact hours are insufficient	Encourages workload redistribution but risks reducing specialist teaching time	Medium
2	Kemendikdasmen (2025)	Certification linearity expanded to include English and coding/AI teaching pathways	Broadens role expectations for English-certified teachers beyond English instruction	Creates flexibility but increases multi-role demands	High
3	Tim Redaksi InfoPendidikan BIC (2025)	Reduction of face-to-face teaching load does not reduce total workload burden	Teachers continue to seek additional assignments to fulfill workload requirements	Administrative compliance may outweigh pedagogical specialization	Medium
4	Efendi et al. (2024)	Specialist English teachers remain limited in many elementary schools	English teachers often serve only selected grades or combine roles with classroom teaching	School staffing shortages intensify dual assignment practices	High
5	Mali & Hestningsih (2016)	English teaching in elementary schools is inconsistently positioned and often lacks institutional support	Assignment of English teachers depends heavily on school-level discretion	Weakens continuity of English instruction and professional identity	Medium
6	Elvina et al. (2026)	Administrative burden and non-teaching tasks remain high under curriculum reform	Dual-role teachers face elevated risk of overload and reduced instructional	Schools require better workload distribution and support systems	Medium

		preparation time				
7	Mardani (2022)	Teacher deployment is frequently shaped by staffing shortages rather than pedagogical specialization	Teachers are assigned to classes based on organizational necessity	Linearity functions not always pedagogically		Medium

A second pattern emerging from the literature is that the policy discourse of flexibility is accompanied by a practical logic of substitution. In many elementary schools, particularly those with a limited number of teachers, English-certified teachers are assigned as classroom teachers because English remains a low-hour subject, often categorized as local content, intrakurikuler terbatas, or school-based enrichment rather than a fully institutionalized core subject. This means that schools face a structural mismatch: they employ or certify teachers with English expertise, but the timetable does not provide enough English teaching hours to sustain their workload status as subject specialists. Consequently, assigning these teachers to homeroom classes becomes an administratively rational solution. Several studies indicate that this arrangement is especially common in schools that must balance teacher shortages, curriculum demands, and accountability pressures simultaneously. From an organizational perspective, such a strategy helps principals fulfill staffing needs and ensures that certified teachers can retain workload eligibility. However, from a pedagogical perspective, it blurs the boundary between specialist and generalist teaching roles. The reviewed evidence therefore suggests that policy-driven flexibility often resolves short-term staffing problems while generating longer-term tensions regarding specialization, continuity of English instruction, and the professional identity of English teachers at the primary level.

A third finding concerns the changing meaning of certification linearity itself. Traditionally, linearity has been associated with the principle that teachers should teach in accordance with their academic background and professional certification. In the context of current elementary school policy, however, linearity appears to have shifted from a strict pedagogical alignment principle toward a more elastic administrative category. The reviewed studies show that English-certified teachers can now be recognized as fulfilling their professional role even when substantial portions of their workload are devoted to classroom teaching, school projects, digital literacy initiatives, or coding- and AI-related instruction. This expansion can be interpreted positively, as it prevents certified teachers from being marginalized in schools where English hours are scarce and allows them to contribute to broader school development agendas. Yet the same flexibility also produces ambiguity. When a teacher's "linear" role includes responsibilities well beyond English language pedagogy, the concept of expertise becomes diluted. In other words, the teacher remains administratively linear while pedagogically operating outside their main specialization for a significant share of their workload. The literature thus reveals an important contradiction: policies designed to protect professional alignment may simultaneously normalize non-specialist deployment when implemented under conditions of staffing shortages and constrained timetables.

A fourth recurring finding is that workload fulfillment under the 37.5-hour framework has direct consequences for the allocation of English instructional time. The issue is not merely that teachers are busy; rather, the workload framework changes the incentive structure of teacher assignment. Since workload calculations include lesson preparation, teaching, assessment, mentoring, and additional duties, teachers and school leaders must assemble a portfolio of tasks that satisfies regulatory requirements. In schools where English is allotted only one or two periods per class—or is not offered in all grade levels—English-certified teachers cannot rely on English teaching alone to meet their expected hours. This creates

pressure to absorb classroom-teacher duties, extracurricular responsibilities, remedial teaching, school administration, or digital program coordination. The reviewed studies consistently suggest that this redistribution has a zero-sum effect on English teaching time. The more teachers are absorbed into generalist classroom roles, the less dedicated time remains for lesson planning, differentiated English instruction, and follow-up assessment. As a result, workload policy affects English learning not only indirectly through teacher fatigue, but directly through the shrinking of specialist instructional space. In this sense, the policy architecture of workload fulfillment becomes inseparable from the pedagogical question of how much English children actually receive in elementary school.

A fifth finding is that the reduction of specialist English teaching time has broader implications for learning coverage and equity across schools. Because English is not uniformly positioned in the elementary curriculum, the extent to which students encounter English depends heavily on school policy, teacher availability, and timetable decisions. The reviewed literature shows considerable variation: some schools introduce English from lower grades through specialist teachers; others limit English to upper grades; still others integrate it into projects or extracurricular activities rather than structured weekly lessons. When English-certified teachers are reassigned to classroom roles, this variation becomes even more pronounced. Schools with stronger resources may still preserve dedicated English sessions through internal scheduling adjustments, while less-resourced schools are more likely to compress English exposure or rely on non-specialist classroom teachers to provide minimal instruction. This creates a pattern of uneven access in which children's opportunity to develop early English literacy, vocabulary, and oral confidence depends not only on curriculum policy but also on staffing arrangements. From a policy perspective, the findings suggest that assignment flexibility, if not carefully regulated, may unintentionally deepen disparities between schools by making English provision contingent on local staffing capacity rather than on a more consistent national or institutional framework.

A sixth finding concerns the professional consequences of role expansion for English teachers themselves. Across the literature, the shift toward multi-role assignments is associated with forms of role conflict, role overload, and professional fragmentation. English teachers who are trained to design communicative language lessons, support pronunciation and vocabulary development, and introduce age-appropriate literacy practices are increasingly expected to function simultaneously as homeroom teachers, assessors of broader competencies, coordinators of projects, and in some cases facilitators of coding or AI-related activities. Such expectations do not necessarily imply that English teachers are incapable of adaptation; indeed, several studies show that teachers often respond with considerable resilience and creativity. The problem is that adaptation occurs within a system that rarely provides equivalent restructuring of support, preparation time, or collaborative planning mechanisms. Consequently, teachers are asked to perform broader roles without always receiving the institutional conditions needed to perform them well. This produces a tension between professional recognition and professional dilution: teachers gain more formal pathways to remain employed and certified, yet their day-to-day work may move further away from the specialized pedagogical practices for which they were prepared. The findings therefore indicate that policy reform has expanded teachers' responsibilities faster than it has expanded the support structures required to sustain quality performance across those responsibilities.

A seventh finding is that school-level implementation mediates the effects of national policy more strongly than formal regulation alone. The reviewed studies repeatedly demonstrate that principals, curriculum coordinators, and local staffing conditions play a decisive role in translating certification and workload rules into actual assignment practices. In some schools, English-certified teachers are used strategically as pedagogical resources:

they continue to teach English across multiple classes while taking on limited classroom or project duties, thereby preserving their specialist contribution. In other schools, the same policies lead to near-complete absorption into classroom teaching, with English reduced to a minor supplementary activity. This variation suggests that the effects of linearity and workload policy cannot be understood as deterministic. Instead, they are filtered through school governance, teacher availability, timetable design, and perceptions of English as either a valuable early-learning resource or a secondary subject that can be compressed when staffing becomes difficult. For an international audience, this finding is significant because it shows that the relationship between teacher policy and classroom practice is not linear; rather, policy outcomes emerge through local organizational interpretation. As such, any assessment of teacher assignment reform in Indonesia must attend not only to national regulations but also to the school-level decision-making processes that shape how those regulations are enacted.

Taken together, the findings in this first section suggest that certification linearity and workload fulfillment policies have generated a profound reconfiguration of English teacher assignment in Indonesian elementary schools. The evidence does not support a simplistic conclusion that the policies are either beneficial or harmful. Instead, they produce a mixed institutional effect: they create formal opportunities for English-certified teachers to remain professionally recognized in schools where English hours are limited, but they also normalize a model of deployment in which specialist expertise is routinely subordinated to broader staffing needs. The main implication is that assignment flexibility should not be evaluated only in terms of administrative efficiency or teacher hour fulfillment. It must also be assessed in relation to pedagogical continuity, subject-specific instructional quality, and equity of student access to English learning. Without such a perspective, linearity risks becoming a compliance label rather than a meaningful framework for aligning teacher expertise, school needs, and curriculum goals.

### **Teaching Quality, Curriculum Consequences, and Technology Integration in Dual-Role English Teaching**

A second pattern concerns the persistence of traditional teaching approaches under conditions of constrained time and weak curricular support. Many of the reviewed studies report that elementary English instruction continues to rely heavily on grammar-translation routines, decontextualized vocabulary drills, repetition, and teacher-centered explanation. This pattern should not be interpreted as evidence that teachers reject innovation or lack awareness of child-centered pedagogy. Rather, the findings indicate that traditional methods often function as coping mechanisms within a constrained institutional environment. When teachers have limited preparation time, no stable curriculum sequence, and responsibility for multiple classes or subjects, they are more likely to choose methods that are familiar, low-risk, and easy to administer. Such methods may help maintain classroom order and provide a visible sense of “teaching English,” but they rarely generate sustained opportunities for oral interaction, meaningful language use, or differentiated practice. As a consequence, students’ learning outcomes tend to cluster around passive recognition of vocabulary and simple written tasks, while oral confidence, pronunciation, and communicative use remain underdeveloped. This finding is important because it reframes instructional quality as a systemic issue rather than an exclusively individual one: the prevalence of traditional pedagogy is linked not only to teacher competence, but also to assignment structures, curricular ambiguity, and the institutional conditions under which teachers work.

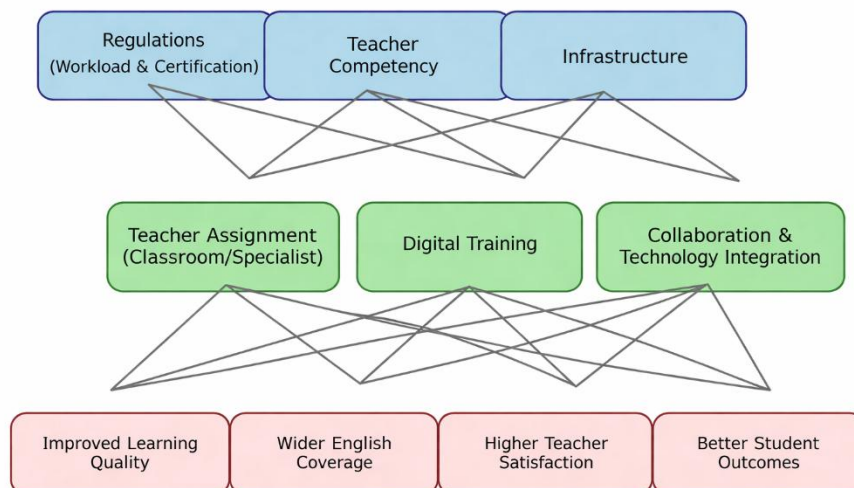
The findings indicate that policy-driven linearity and workload fulfillment often compel English-certified teachers to adopt generalist classroom roles, limiting their ability to focus on English instruction (Mardani, 2022; Tim Redaksi InfoPendidikan BIC, 2025).

Workload fulfillment under Permendikdasmen 11/2025 requires teachers to complete 37.5 hours per week, including planning, teaching, assessment, and additional responsibilities. When English teaching hours are insufficient, teachers must assume classroom roles, reducing exposure to English instruction and limiting content coverage (Efendi et al., 2024; Elvina et al., 2026).

Teaching quality is also affected by limited instructional time and insufficient collaboration between linear and classroom teachers. Many schools lack structured English curricula, forcing teachers to adopt traditional grammar-translation methods, resulting in students with limited vocabulary and low oral proficiency (Maili & Hestingsih, 2016; Putri et al., 2025).

**Technology Integration:** Learning Management Systems (LMS), AI-assisted language tools, Augmented Reality (AR), and game-based learning (GBL) enhance instructional efficiency and student engagement. LMS enables blended learning, digital assessment, and administrative management (Putri et al., 2025). AI tools support personalized feedback and adaptive exercises, while AR and GBL provide immersive experiences and reinforce vocabulary retention (Fatimina et al., 2026; Putri et al., 2025). Continuous teacher training and micro-credential programs further enable effective integration of technology (Hanafiah et al., 2026).

**Discussion:** Linear certification policies provide career opportunities but also create role conflict, requiring teachers to balance specialist and generalist responsibilities. High administrative demands exacerbate role overload and burnout risk (Elvina et al., 2026). Technology offers a mitigating solution, yet its effectiveness depends on infrastructure availability, teacher digital literacy, and supportive policies. Integration of technology with innovative curriculum models ensures linear teachers contribute effectively without compromising English learning quality.



**Figure 1. IPO Model of Technology-Based English Teacher Assignment**

This conceptual model demonstrates that policy input, teacher competence, and infrastructure drive the process of assigning teachers, providing digital training, and integrating technology, which collectively produce improved learning outcomes, broader English coverage, and higher teacher satisfaction. The model underscores the importance of supportive policies and technological tools in optimizing linear English teacher performance in elementary schools.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the policies on teacher certification linearity and workload have significant and complex implications for linear English teachers in Indonesian elementary schools. Certification linearity provides career opportunities, allowing English-certified teachers to take on classroom teaching and coding–AI subjects, yet it also imposes additional responsibilities beyond their specialization. Workload fulfillment under Permendikdasmen 11/2025, which requires 37.5 hours per week, often forces teachers to assume dual roles, limiting time for English instruction and reducing the coverage and quality of learning. Traditional teaching methods prevail when specialist teachers are scarce, resulting in students acquiring limited vocabulary and oral skills. Integrating educational technologies, such as Learning Management Systems, AI-assisted tools, Augmented Reality, and game-based learning, emerges as a critical solution to mitigate these challenges. Technology enables broader learning coverage, interactive and personalized instruction, and alleviates administrative burdens. Continuous professional development, micro-credentials, and collaboration between linear and classroom teachers further enhance teaching effectiveness and curriculum implementation. The findings suggest the need for flexible policy frameworks that recognize digital teaching hours, provide structured training for teacher role transitions, and support equitable technology access. Future studies should empirically evaluate the combined impact of certification policies, workload, and technology integration on student learning outcomes and teacher performance, including comparative research between urban and rural schools, as well as experimental testing of collaborative models and AI/AR-assisted interventions.

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